



LEONARD & BINA ELLEN ART GALLERY
UNIVERSITÉ CONCORDIA
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MARTHA WILSON: STAGING THE SELF

CURATED BY PETER DYKHUIS
JANUARY 6–FEBRUARY 19 2011

Organized and circulated by
Independent Curators International (ICI), New York.

The exhibition and tour are made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Cowles Charitable Trust, the ICI Board of Trustees, and ICI Benefactors Barbara and John Robinson. Its presentation in Montreal is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts.

Events

TOUR OF THE EXHIBITION WITH ARTIST
MARTHA WILSON AND CURATOR PETER DYKHUIS
followed by exhibition opening reception.
Wednesday January 19, 5 PM (at the Gallery, FREE)

PERFORMANCE AND IDENTITY

Seminar with artist Martha Wilson and curator Peter Dykhuis,
Reservation necessary.
Thursday January 20, 10 PM - noon (at the Gallery, FREE)

MARTHA WILSON OFFERS HER PERSPECTIVE ON FEMINIST RESEARCH

In conjunction with the Compulsive Browse Colloquium.
Saturday February 19, 5 PM (At the Gallery, FREE)

GALLERY HOURS :
Tuesday to Friday, 12 - 6 PM;
Saturday, 12 - 5 PM

ACTIVITIES : www.ellengallery.concordia.ca

TOURS : Marina Polosa, mpolosa@alcor.concordia.ca
514.848.2424 ext 4778

FREE ADMISSION / Wheelchair accessible



This first retrospective of American feminist artist Martha Wilson, curated by Peter Dykhuis, presents her career in a series of three interwoven layers.

Martha Wilson is a pioneering feminist artist and gallery director who, over the past four decades, has created innovative photographic and video works that explore her female subjectivity through role-playing, costume transformations and invasions of male and female personas. In her work and throughout her life, Wilson has explored how identity and positioning are not just self-defined or projected, but also negotiated. The complex nature of her work encompasses her activities as an artist; her collaboration with other women to form the group DISBAND; and her position as the founder and director of the non-profit space Franklin Furnace in New York.

Written into and out of art history according to the theories and convictions of the time, Wilson along with Suzy Lake in Montreal, was one of the very earliest artists to explore the effects of "camera presence" in self-representation, using masquerade as a form of resistance in manipulating both her internal sense of self and her outward appearance. Their strategies would be echoed in the photo-based work of artists such as Cindy Sherman who came to prominence in the 1980s.

In 1976, Martha Wilson founded Franklin Furnace, a non-profit space which she directed until 1996 when it occupied a storefront in Tribeca in Lower Manhattan. Since its inception, Franklin Furnace has served the local, national and international community of activist artists who have addressed urgent subjects such as war, poverty, disease, racism, sexism, and homophobia. Under Wilson's continued direction, Franklin Furnace "went virtual" on its 20th anniversary, providing artists with a digital platform for freedom of expression.

This retrospective consists of three sections. The first is a selection of early solo photographic works and videos from her years in Halifax, which show her innovations in playing with different age, gender and social identities. The second section focuses on New York in the mid-1970s, where she continued to be active as a performance artist in collaboration with other feminist performers in the female group DISBAND (1978 – 82), and then in solo performances in which she 'invaded' the personas of American political figures of the Conservative Right. The third is represented by her selection of projects from each of Franklin Furnace's thirty years of programming, from 1976 through 2006, which add up to a self-portrait of sorts.

Image: Martha Wilson performing with members of DISBAND, 1979. Photo: Barbara Quinn